

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph at lines 13-21 of page 1 of the specification with the following paragraph:

However, it is now known that, if polyethylene implants are exposed to radiation while the gaseous atmosphere surrounding the implants contains oxygen, phenomena of oxidation of the polyethylene ~~eeer~~ occurs. More precisely the exposure to radiation provokes the break of polyethylene chains of the polyethylene which, in the presence of oxygen, recombine with the latter, leading to the reduction of the molecular weight of the polyethylene and to the degradation of its mechanical properties. In the absence of oxygen, polyethylene chains recombine together, increasing the rate of cross-linking of the polyethylene, which guarantees good mechanical properties of the implant.

Please replace the paragraph at lines 25-26 of page 4 and lines 1-2 of page 5 of the specification with the following paragraph:

Other characteristics of the outer envelope and of the inner sachet will appear from the following description of an example of a process of packing in carried out in order to obtain the packing in 1. In the following specification, the pressures indicated are absolute pressures.

Please replace the paragraph at lines 3-10 of page 5 of the specification with the following paragraph:

As shown in Figure 2, the implant 2 is firstly placed in the inner sachet 8, of which the dimensions, flat, are advantageously a length of about L and a width of about 1. To that end, the sachet 8 comprises an opening 10 adapted to be sealed by fusion of the polyamide forming the inner layer of the sachet 8. The sachet 8 containing the implant 2 is positioned beneath a bell 12, using a positioning bar 14 whose position is pre-established so that the opening 10 of the sachet 8 is disposed between open heat-sealing jaws 16. The bell 12 is provided with vacuum-creating means (not shown).

Please replace the paragraph at lines 19-22 of page 5 of the specification with the following paragraph:

At instant t_2 , the jaws are opened again and the chamber defined by the bell 12 is re-pressurized. The sachet 8 being hermetically closed, the pressure prevailing inside this sachet 8 remains substantially equal to the pressure P_{VACUUM} . The quality of the weld may then be visually checked.

Please replace the paragraph at lines 23-27 of page 5 and lines 1-2 of page 6 of the specification with the following paragraph:

As shown in Figure 4, the sachet 8 containing the implant 2 is then placed in the outer envelope 6 whose dimensions are advantageously a length equal to about $2 \times L$ and a width equal to about L . To that end, the envelope 6 comprises an opening 20 adapted to be sealed by fusion of the polyamide which partly forms this sachet 8. The envelope 6 is positioned in the bell 12, using the positioning bar 14 previously displaced with respect to its position of Figure 2, so that the opening 20 is disposed between the open jaws 16.

Please replace the paragraph at lines 12-19 of page 6 of the specification with the following paragraph:

From t_3 to t_4 , the injection means 22 are then employed so as to inject, via a nozzle 24 opening into the opening 20 of the envelope 6, argon coming from a bottle 26 storing argon at high pressure and passing successively from this bottle through a pressure reducing valve 28, a filtering member 30, a pressure gauge 32 and a control valve 34. The pressure gauge 32 ensures that the pressure of argon injected is of the order of 1 bar. The nozzle 24 is calibrated so that the flowrate of argon is sufficiently low and stable to avoid blowing of the envelope 6.

Please replace the paragraph at lines 26-27 of page 6 and lines 1-4 of page 7 of the specification with the following paragraph:

At instant t_5 , the jaws are opened again, the argon injection means 22 [[are]] is stopped and the bell 12, after having possibly been re-pressurized further, is opened. The envelope 6 being hermetically closed, the gaseous atmosphere prevailing inside this envelope passes rapidly from pressure P_L to atmospheric pressure P_{ATMO} and the volume occupied by the envelope 6 is reduced[[,]] by deformation in compression of the flexible multi-layer structure of the envelope 6.

Please replace the paragraph at lines 5-10 of page 7 of the specification with the following paragraph:

The assembly formed by the implant 2, the envelope 6 and the sachet 8 is then placed inside the rigid packing 4, folding the envelope 6 once on itself so that its space requirement in length is about L . The volume occupied by the envelope 6 is dimensioned so as to be inscribed in substantially complementary manner in the internal volume of the packing 4, with the result that the inner sachet 8 containing the implant is immobilized, as represented in Figure 1.

Please replace the paragraph at lines 11-13 of page 7 of the specification with the following paragraph:

In order to sterilize the implant 2, the packaging 1 formed by the implant 2, the envelope 6, the sachet 8 and the packing 4 is then exposed to γ (gamma) rays, possibly after having been transported up to a source of radiation.